

Message Text

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S E C R E T GENEVA 6805

EXDIS

FROM STERNER

E.O.11652 GDS

TAGS PFOR

SUBJ GENEVA MILITARY WORKING GROUP: MEETING 2

1. IT HAS BEEN FRUSTRATING TASK TODAY TO TRY TO PIECE TOGETHER COHERENT PICTURE OF WHAT HAPPENED AT SECOND WORKING GROUP MEETING TODAY WHICH LASTED TWO HOURS AND 15 MINUTES. BY THEIR OWN ADMISSION TWO SIDES ARE THEMSELVES HAVING TROUBLE FIGURING OUT WHAT OTHER SAID ON SOME POINTS. EVERYBODY IS AGREED THAT (A) ATMOSPHERE WAS MORE RELAXED THAN AT FIRST MEETING; (B) NOTHING SIGNIFICANTLY NEW OF SUBSTANCE EMERGED; (C) FURTHER DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTS GOVERNING DISENGAGEMENT, ALTHOUGH REPETITIOUS AND FRUSTRATING FOR MOST PART, WAS NOT QUITE TOTAL WASTE OF TIME. ISRAELI ATTITUDE WAS ONE OF MILD SATISFACTION; EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE WAS THAT NOTHING MORE COULD BE EXPECTED UNTIL AFTER THE ISRAELI ELECTION.

2. BOTH SIDES SPENT MUCH OF THEIR TIME IN FURTHER EXPLANATION OF "PRINCIPLES" SET FORTH AT FIRST MEETING. ISRAELIS AGAIN PUT STRESS ON NEED FOR "RECIPROCITY" AND "MUTAL CONTRIBUTION", CITING AS EXAMPLE PROPOSITION THAT GREATER THE RECIPROCITY,
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THE FARTHER EAST ISRAEL WOULD BE WILLING TO DRAW DISENGAGEMENT LINE. GUR ALSO SPENT SOME TIME QUESTIONING PURPOSE OF EGYPTIAN PRINCIPLE THAT FORCES MUST BE SEPARATED BY DISTANCE OF LONG-RANGE ARTILLERY. AS GUR LATER EXPLAINED TO ME

PRIVATELY, THRUST OF HIS REMARKS ON THIS OCCASION WAS TO MAKE EGYPTIANS SEE THAT TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH EGYPT'S PRINCIPLES QUA PRINCIPLES BUT IN THEIR APPLICATION THERE WAS GOING TO HAVE TO BE SOME GIVE AND TAKE. EGYPTIANS APPARENTLY STILL DID NOT SHOW RESPONSIVENESS TO THIS ISRAELI PRINCIPLE.

3. ONLY NEW ANGLE SIILASVUO SAW APPEARED ORIGINALLY IN WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS "LONG AND MUDDY" PRESENTATION BY MAGDUB, GIST OF WHICH UPON CLARIFICATION WAS THAT WHILE EGYPT EXPECTED FINAL DISENGAGEMENT LINE TO BE CLEARLY DEFINED, ISRAELIS COULD WITHDRAW TO IT BY SERIES OF MOVES TO INTERVENING LINES ACCORDING TO SPECIFIED TIME TABLE. GUR TENDED TO BELITTLE THIS, TELLING ME THAT IN HIS OPINION MAGDUB WAS ONLY STATING THE OBVIOUS, VIZ., THAT ARMIES DON'T JUMP BACKWARDS 30 KILOMETERS IN ONE DAY. HE THOUGHT MAGDUB WAS TALKING ABOUT LOGISTICAL NOT POLITICAL TIMETABLE.

4. GOOD DEAL OF TIME WAS SPENT ON REVIEWING RECORD OF KILOMETER 101 TALKS, TO LITTLE PURPOSE, SIILASVUO THOUGHT. GUR ASKED AT ONE POINT IF EGYPTIAN NOVEMBER 22 PROPOSAL WAS STILL VALID. MAGDUB SAID NO; THEY VIEWED GENEVA TALKS AS MAKING FRESH START.

5. GUR WAS ENCOURAGED ON ONE POINT. COMPLAINING AT MEETING ABOUT INCREASING NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS OF CEASEFIRE, HE CITED SOME ARAB STATEMENT TO EFFECT THIS WAS DELIBERATE EGYPTIAN POLICY, AND ASKED MAGDUB IF HE HAD ANY COMMENT. MAGDUB REPLIED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT IT WAS EGYPT'S POLICY TO OBSERVE CEASEFIRE.

6. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 2 AT 5 P.M. SOMEWHAT TO ISRAELIS SURPRISE, EGYPTIANS READILY AGREED TO THIS RATHER LONG GAP BETWEEN MEETINGS. GUR HAS NOW ASKED JERUSALEM TO BRING HIM BACK FOR CONSULTATIONS IN INTERIM, FEELING HE NEEDS FRESH INJECTION OF VERBIAGE (HE THINKS IT WILL STILL BE TOO EARLY FOR SUBSTANCE) FOR JANUARY 2 MEETING. BUT HE
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BELIEVES JERUSALEM MAY BE RELUCTANT TO HAVE HIM COME BACK IF EGYPTIANS KEEP THEIR MEN HERE. I TOLD GUR I THOUGHT THIS SHOULD INDEED BE FACTOR IN ISRAELI CONSIDERATION. SIILASVUO ALSO SEES THIS AS OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM TO TEND TO HIS UNEF AFFAIRS. INCIDENTALLY, TWO PRINCIPAL INTERLOCUTORS SEEM TO FIND EACH OTHER TOLERABLE. MAGDUB ABOUT GUR: "HE'S LESS DOGMATIC THAN SION". GUR ABOUT MAGDUB: "I THINK HE'S WARMING UP A LITTLE".BASSIN

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